

Town of Hampton



*Department of Resources and
Economic Development*



**Hampton Beach Area Commission
100 Winnacunnet Road
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842
Selectmen's Meeting Room – Town Hall
Special Public Meeting – June 11, 2015
6:00 PM**

Hampton Beach Potential Transportation Improvements

NOTES

In Attendance from the HBAC:

John Nyhan, Chairman, Town of Hampton Representative
Fran McMahon, Rockingham Planning Commission/Planning Board
Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce
Bill Watson, Vice Chairman-NH Department of Transportation
Rick Griffin, Town of Hampton Representative/Board of Selectmen

Also In Attendance:

New Hampshire DOT – Project Manager – William Rose
VHB Project Manager – Gordon Leedy
VHB Dale Abbot
VHB Robert White
Brian Wilson – DRED
BJ Doc Noel, Chamber of Commerce
Mary Louise Woolsey, Hampton Board of Selectmen
Senator Nancy Stiles
David Walker, Rockingham County Planning
Ann Carnaby, Planning Board
Jason Bachand, Town Planner
Anne Marchand, Secretary
12 – 14 Interested Residents from Town/Beach

The meeting was televised, live, by Channel 22 and will be re-run. Check Channel 22 Listings.

Mr. Nyhan explained that this meeting is part of an effort to update the Hampton Beach Area Master Plan of 2001 – Transportation. The project is being managed by the NHDOT on behalf of the Hampton Beach Area Commission and is funded through a Federal Transportation, Community, & System Preservation Grant from the Federal Highway Administration in the amount of \$375,000 which includes \$75,000 in kind/20% local match. The HBAC has the authority to approve and/or disapprove of projects; however, they rely on the NHDOT for technical advice. The main contractor who is doing work on the first part of the project is VHB with Gordon Leedy as Project Manager.

Mr. Rose stated that this project is focused on doing more than updating a plan and people are interested in seeing if this will be more than just plans. He stated “Yes”. Part I is to update the plan using ideas people have expressed as to amenities and improvements in the various areas. The action plan is to start to refine design concepts and decide what is out there for options and what makes sense. Community support, he stated, will get the plan through to engineering and design.

Mr. Leedy said he wants to get done what needs to be done and to have open discussions for thoughts and questions. He also noted the exciting things being done through Social Media.

Mr. Leedy noted that the 2001 Master Plan set out to be a 50 Year Master Plan and there are existing conditions now that are the same as those existing back in 2001 including: limited parking, poor levels of service, limited public transit, pedestrian conflict, and poor bike conditions. Further he reviewed plans which include bridge reconstruction, Ocean Blvd. reconstruction to one-way to the north, Ashworth Avenue as three lanes, two-way traffic; and one way side streets, which has been implemented. He also noted there is a proposal to install traffic signals at Rt 1A and four signals on Ashworth and Highland. Suggestions also include pedestrian walkways (cross walks), and a means of turning pieces of Ocean Blvd into pedestrian-only walkways.

Mr. Leedy noted that the North Beach area is simpler in that it would involve sand management, providing additional parking facilities by reworking some of the existing parking facilities; and, improving the gateway aspect to the beach. Some work has been done in the area including a new bath house.

He stated that the State Park redevelopment project is a resounding success which opened potential and hopes to keep “the train moving”.

The basic issues under discussion are: Several different kinds of traffic that traverse Ocean Blvd., which include cruising, looking for parking at the beach, one way circulation on side streets, numbers of pedestrians from Haverhill St. up to the Marine Memorial. Further, there is frustration for vehicle traffic getting from Seabrook to No. Hampton which creates difficult situations.

Supported by a plan-drawing, he spoke to the mapping of sidewalks, and bike and transit accommodations. He stated that traffic counts were done as well as review of State Park improvements and environmental resources. He commented that good data was collect last summer. The area covered on the plan shown was a study area from Boar’s Head to south of the

bridge. He noted that the whole beach will be looked at to a certain extent. Also, the flood plain area could be a problem in the 50-year plan.

Mr. Leedy invited those present to review the maps provided by VHB.

In closing, he stated that public and private parking is a patchwork, which is an issue moving forward, with Hampton Beach becoming more popular for investments. Some areas will fill up with buildings, therefore adequate parking must be ensured. The key, he stated, is providing a safe place for pedestrians to be and adequate access for businesses to do what they have to do to be successful.

The audience and participants were then divided into three groups for a round table discussion of the most pressing issues, suggestions, as well as “the best and the worst”. They are as follows:

Group I.

- The Bridge – critical issue in terms of emergencies, danger – needs to be made wider with two lanes each way and a fixed span;
- Sidewalks on the west side of Ocean Boulevard;
- Separation and connection between parking areas – if this was improved it would provide better and wider sidewalks;
- Design is now for cars, should be a design for people;
- Maintenance and ownership of sidewalks;
- Broader transportation services- taxi?
- If some type of a transit, need space to function, being viable and visible;
- Never enough parking;
- Tourist shuttle;
- Signage on Ashworth Avenue;
- Walkers; bikers; skateboarders – safety;
- Comment that signals would be problematic and good street design could make traffic circulation better.

Group II

- Congestion on turn-over day at all entrances to the beach;
- Once get to the beach, people do not realize they are anywhere – Gateway is an issue;
- State Park is underutilized and this would a potential issue solver;
- Shuttle loop taking people around is needed;
- App on Smart Phone, etc. to alert people as to traffic and help people exit;
- Reconstruction of Ocean Blvd taking pedestrians, storm water, and site distance at intersections into account;
- Bath House;
- Police could help with traffic and pedestrian control.

Group III

- Entrance to State Park – lacking good signage and use of side street to cut across to shorten cycle;
- Rail alternative – additional transportation corridor;

- Lack of parking at beach front; cruising; lack of utilization of State Park;
- Reasonably priced parking at the beach;
- CPA Lot – emergency access with vehicles queuing out – difficult in emergency;
- Bus Lane – better utilization;
- Who has Ownership of the sidewalks;
- Increasing width of sidewalks – Ashworth south from Boar’s Head to Winnacunnet;
- Issue of skateboards and bikes on sidewalks;
- Implementing traffic controls seasonally;
- North of Boar’s Head – seawall and issues with line of sight (bike safety).

Following the round-table discussions, attendees were asked to look at all of the above issues, etc., and place Post-it notes on those they felt to be the most important. This recorder was unable to tally up the items in order of importance; however, am sure VHB will provide this information at a later date.

Mr. Letty spoke of what comes next in that this is the first public outreach session. He said that data will be taken from this evening’s meeting, and VHB will come up with alternatives that make sense for 2015. He announced that there will be another public meeting in the early fall, just after Labor Day. He also reported there is a Web Site – [PlanHamptonBeach2015](#), as well as Face Book and Twitter Accounts. He also spoke about [Mysidewalk.com](#), which requires creating an account; however, allows for dialogue which would be an exciting way to continue this type of a conversation.

Lastly, there are efforts being made to meet the needs of the community; at the second public workshop, priorities will have been developed; and, it is hoped the priorities can be taken to develop the implementation plan which then will become a document ready for adoption by the end of the year. The document, he stated, will come out of these community discussions.

Mr. Letty thanked the participants involved in this public meeting.

Mr. Nyhan concluded the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and thanked those in attendance, noting that people can continue discussion and interaction through Social Media.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Marchand, Secretary

*List of participants attached.